

Monday, July 11, 2005

Black & Minority Health Fair kicks off July 14

Hoosiers will receive "Keys to a Healthier You" at the 20th annual Black & Minority Health Fair, July 14 to 17, 2005, when they take advantage of its more than \$1,000 worth of free health screenings.

Sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health, the Health Fair offers free health education and counseling services addressing issues affecting the health of minority populations in Indiana.

"In particular, we want to reach those individuals who lack access to health care," said Martha Bonds, Minority Health Fair director. "Our goal for the four-day event is to focus attention on the diseases and health conditions that adversely affect minority populations."

The Health Fair will kickoff July 14 at 4 p.m. with a keynote address by professional speaker, author, and television personality, Les Brown.

Brown will motivate participants to achieve better health by sharing his personal experience of living with hypertension. Brown will appear on the Health Fair stage in Exhibit Hall D. His presentation is sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp. The event will also feature Garth N. Graham, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Office of Minority Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

The Health Fair will be held at the Indiana Convention Center, 100 South Capitol Avenue, in Exhibit Hall D during the following hours:

- ♦Thurs., July 14 from 5 to 8 p.m.
- ♦Fri., July 15 from 1 to 8 p.m.
- ♦Sat., July 16 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- ♦Sun., July 17 from noon to 8 p.m.

The Health Fair features many screenings, including the "One Stop-One Stick" process that offers an entire series of screenings with just one

blood draw.

New this year is the Central Indiana Cancer Center's clinical breast exam screening area, and a Bio-electric Impedance Analysis performed by the American Heart Association and Guidant. Risk assessment for eczema and foot fungus will also be provided by Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

For a complete list of numerous screenings and attractions available at the Health Fair, visit the ISDH's Web site at www.statehealth.in.gov and click on the Black & Minority Health Fair link.



Indiana State
Department of Health

Presents

*Keys
To A
Healthier
You*
The 20th Annual
**Black & Minority
Health Fair**
July 14-17, 2005
At IBE's Summer Celebration
Indiana Convention Center Hall D

Loren Robertson joins ISDH staff



Photo by Daniel Axler

Loren Robertson joined the staff of the Indiana State Department of Health as the Assistant Commissioner for Community and Family Health Services on May 9, 2005.

After 30 years of public health experience, Robertson is continuing his career on a state level.

In his opinion, the collaboration between local and state level is crucial. He believes that public health takes place in many areas, particularly in channels of local health departments.

"We need to strengthen the partnership with local health departments," he said.

The ISDH's Local Liaison Office, he explained, will be a key in doing just that.

"The Local Liaison Office should be the first office they call

when they identify a specific need and are looking for help," he said. "We want to be their partner in identifying resources to assist them in addressing any public health issue. There is no shortage of public health problems in Indiana, and all local health departments must know we are prepared to stand with them to meet their challenge."

Prior to coming to ISDH, Robertson worked for 30 years in the Allen County Health Department. Among other positions, he worked as a health educator, director of the food protection division, legisla-

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Measles reported in three Indiana counties

The Indiana State Department of Health worked with local health departments recently to deal with a measles outbreak in Tippecanoe, White and Clinton counties.

The first two cases were confirmed by the ISDH laboratory on June 1. Over the next several days, more cases emerged. As of July 1, the case count had risen to 33. The measles cases were the first in Indiana since 2002.

"The primary outbreak occurred in individuals who had not received a measles vaccination," said ISDH Epidemiologist Wayne Staggs, who also noted that measles can be prevented with two doses of

safe, effective vaccine. "One dose of measles vaccine provides immunity in 95 percent of people and two doses provide immunity in 99 percent."

After the outbreak was first discovered, health officials recommended that residents of Tippecanoe and Clinton counties who were born after 1956 check their immunization status with their health care providers.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can sometimes have severe complications. Measles usually begins with cold-like symptoms like a runny nose, cough, and red or sensitive eyes, followed by a

high fever and rash.

The rash normally appears three days after the cold symptoms occur and usually lasts about four or five days.

Measles can be spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes or when a person touches the nose or throat drainage of an infected person. Sometimes, articles recently touched by an infected person's nose or throat drainage can also spread the disease.

No antibiotics are available for infected persons. Instead, treatment is aimed at comfort.

—Andy Zirkle

'Sports Spot' looking for teen volunteers

At the upcoming Black and Minority Health Fair, Governor Mitch Daniels' 'Sports Spot' will feature an exciting bicycle safety course for children.

Riley Hospital for Children is again providing the course itself. This year, new signs will feature information on Major Taylor, the Lance Armstrong of the 18th century!

Major, an Indianapolis native, was the first African-American world champion in any sport.

Additionally, this year's course will feature teens instructing younger children on bicycle safety using the curriculum developed by Riley.

The Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports is looking for responsible teens willing to spend time teaching others the valuable skill of safe bicycling.

Volunteers will receive a t-shirt and access to the 'Sports Spot.'

The 'Sports Spot' will reappear later in the summer during the 12 days of the Indiana State Fair.

There, celebrity basketball and performances by groups from around the state will entertain the hundreds of thousands of visitors.

For more information on volunteering, contact Eric Neuburger, at 317-233-7671.



—Eric Neuburger



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Spring STAR Awards presented



State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, left, and Tami Barrett.



Carolyn Dawson, left, receives her award from Dr. Monroe.



Gene Clevinger, left, with Dr. Monroe. (Photos by Julie Fletcher)

Three Indiana State Department of Health employees were honored by their peers with STAR Awards last month.

State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D., presented the awards that recognize outstanding employees for **S**ervice, **T**eamwork, **A**ttitude, and **R**espect.

Tami Barrett, Commissioner's Office, won the professional, administrative and technological category. Tami was applauded for being "one of the most dedicated and organized team members in government." It was noted that she is one of the first people in the building in the morning and one of the last people to leave in the evening. One nominee said that she calls her "Mary Poppins because of her attitude." Another nominee said that Tami demonstrates teamwork by her selflessness and that her attitude is always positive even when she is overwhelmed with work or if problems arise. It was said that "Tami's dedication, efforts, and hard work make the ISDH run smoother, and makes all of our jobs easier and more enjoyable."

Carolyn Dawson, Finance, received the STAR award for the supervisor, manager, and executive staff category. Carolyn was honored for her work in the Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response Division. It was noted that Carolyn is a "vital part" of the emergency preparedness team and that her "positive attitude and her respect for others is a bonus, and it is infectious." Carolyn was applauded for arriving early, staying late and working hard in between and for smiling every moment in the day, and for frequently going out of her way to encourage her co-workers when they need encouragement. One nominee wrote that "We are all better for having Carolyn as a co-worker. Six million Hoosiers are better for having Carolyn as a public servant in this agency and in this program."

Gene Clevinger, Children's Special Health Care Services, won the Labor, Trades, and Crafts category. Gene was honored for his great planning, organizational skills. It was noted that he has shown himself to be a dedicated and hard-working employee who learned and understood the Children's Special Health Care Services program and his role very quickly. Gene was applauded for tackling any task he is assigned with enthusiasm and professionalism.



Public health conference held in Bloomington

Public health professionals from throughout the state gathered on the Indiana University Campus May 18 to 20 for the Indiana Public Health Association's spring conference.

Highlights included addresses by State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D.; Indiana State Representative Peggy Welch; and Indiana Economic Development Cooperation President Michael "Mickey" Maurer.

Several Indiana State Department of Health employees attended, and some presented, at the conference. Among the presenters were Judy Ganser, M.D. and Tanya Parrish. Dr. Monroe presented "The State of Indiana," Thursday morning and discussed Indiana's health priorities and how they related to the national Healthy People 2010 campaign (see related Indiana Rural Health Conference story).

Indiana Children

Maternal and Children's Special Health Care Services Medical Director Judy Ganser, M.D., presented "State of the Child in Indiana."

Dr. Ganser discussed the role of the Maternal and Children's Special Health Care Services division at the Indiana State Department of Health, perinatal health, projects on which the division is working on,

and the high risk behavior factors of Indiana youth.

According to 2002 statistics, of the 85,000 Indiana births, 11.4 percent were to women under the age of 20, and 36 percent were to unmarried moms. The infant mortality rate was near the United States average at 7.6 percent. Dr. Ganser also discussed Indiana's preterm labor statistics and low birthweight statistics, early prenatal care, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Session participants learned about the new Indiana Birth Defects and Problems Registry maintained by the ISDH. "In the past, we used birth certificates to get this information, but birth defects that were diagnosed later

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Tanya Parrish, above, discussed the coordinated school health program at the Indiana Public Health Conference in Bloomington in May. Left, William Thornton, Chronic Disease, also presented at the conference. Here, he greeted conference participants at his booth describing Indiana's Cancer Control Plan. (Photos by Julie Fletcher)



Welcome new employees!



Majori Allen, Chronic Disease
Loren Robertson, Assistant Commissioner
Charles Hostetter, LRC Chemistry Labs
Monica Powell, WIC

Kathryn Ziebell, Maternal and Children's Special Health Care Services
Seth Brooke, Long Term Care

ISDH represented at Rural Health Conference

State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D., described Indiana's Public Health Priorities during the keynote address at the Rural Health Conference this month in French Lick, Indiana.

Nearly 600 health professionals, students, and vendors gathered at the French Lick Springs Resort to discuss "Rural Health: Our Future in Our Hands."

"Public health touches everyone's health," Dr. Monroe began.

One priority, she said, is to increase the public value of prevention. "We need to get the public to appreciate prevention," she stressed.

Another, she said, is to increase the public's value of preparedness. Emerging threats, she explained, include pandemic influenza, increased natural disasters, and biological and chemical terrorism.

Economic development, personal health management, children and adolescent health promotion, access to quality health care, and education and community-based programs are also priorities.

Adolescent program focus areas include, among others, obesity, responsible sexual behavior, cigarette smoking, alcohol and drug use, and physical fitness activity.

Access to quality care, Dr. Monroe explained, is multifaceted. "There are people who don't trust the system." And, she said, there are those who don't have a physician or won't go to hospitals.

Dr. Monroe also touched on the Healthy People 2010 national goals:

- ◆Increasing physical activity
- ◆Decreasing overweight and obesity
- ◆Decreasing cigarette smoking
- ◆Decreasing use of alcohol and illicit drugs
- ◆Increasing responsible sexual behavior
- ◆Increasing the number of those who are depressed that receive treatment
- ◆Decreasing motor vehicle deaths and homicides
- ◆Decreasing ozone and environmental tobacco smoke exposure
- ◆Increasing immunization coverage
- ◆Increasing access to health coverage

"We have to be more creative than we have been in the past," Dr. Monroe said, about reaching the goals. "The opportunity is huge."

A wide range of session topics was available including Homeland Security, rural health access, physician recruitment and retention, and methamphetamine intervention. Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman also discussed the new Office of Rural Affairs and new State Department of Agriculture.



State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D., discussed Indiana's health priorities at the opening keynote session of the Rural Health Conference in French Lick.



Bob Sunman, director, Indiana State Office of Rural Health, addresses the participants at the conference.



Jelena Nikodijevic, Office of Public Affairs, poses with Marc LoCascio, ITS, at his booth promoting the Learning Management System. (Photos by Daniel Axler)

HEALTH

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were not included,” said Dr. Ganser. The new registry requires that physicians and hospitals report certain conditions up to age two, and others, such as autism and fetal alcohol syndrome, up to age five. This is important, Dr. Ganser said, because birth defects are the leading cause of infant death in the United States.

The Folic Acid Campaign, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative, Childhood Obesity Prevention Strategic Plan, and the Asthma Strategic Plan are other projects Dr. Ganser mentioned.

The ISDH also identified high risk factors of Indiana youth through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a national survey of 9th through 12th graders that monitors students’ health risks and behaviors.

Some of the results, Dr. Ganser explained, show that in Indiana, 19.3 percent of high school students smoke regularly, 49 percent of the respondents have had sex, and 38 percent of them are currently sexually active. Other survey topics include weight and nutrition, alcohol use, drug use,

and suicide.

Coordinated Health

Tanya Parrish, Indiana State Department of Health Coordinated School Health Program Director, discussed “Why to Support a Coordinated Approach to School Health.”

A partnership between the Indiana State Department of Health and Indiana Department of Education, the program is based on a five-year Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) grant and has a strong focus on obesity, nutrition, physical activity, ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs), and chronic disease.

A coordinated approach to school health is aimed at removing the barriers to learning by improving the physical and emotional health of students and staff, Parrish explained.

Among the benefits, she said, are reduced school absenteeism, fewer behavioral problems, and new levels of cooperation among parents, teachers, and organizations.

“It can also help improve test scores,” she said.

Parrish explained the eight interactive components of the program: school environment; health education; school meals and nutrition; physical education; health ser-

vices; counseling, psychological and mental health services; staff wellness; and parent/community partnerships.

“A coordinated school health program involves all of the components working together,” Parrish said.

Ten Indiana school systems are participating in the Michiana Coordinated School Health Leadership Institute and receive intensive leadership training.

The school systems include Batesville Community School Corporation, Brown County Schools, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Greencastle Community School Corporation, Greenfield Community Schools, Goshen Community Schools, Indianapolis Public Schools, Middlebury Community Schools, Southern Wells Community Schools, and Vigo County Schools Corporation.

Other Indiana State Department of Health conference presenters included William Thornton, Chronic Disease; Patrice Christoffersen, Maternal and Child Health; Linda Jones, Epidemiology Resource Center; Suzanne Hancock, Arthritis Program; Margaret Pike, Office of Policy; and Barbara Gibson, Office of Policy.

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tive liaison for Allen County commissioners, and department administrator. Robertson hopes that his extensive involvement and experience in the public health arena particularly in the “trenches” of local health departments, as he calls it, will give him an opportunity to contribute and help all divisions in ISDH to improve the health conditions of Hoosiers.

“It should be easy for all of us to get up in the morning and come to work. We are doing such a good thing for Hoosiers. We all are putting a lasting impact on their well being and the well being of their children,” he said.

Robertson believes there is no shortage of public health issues and when ISDH is successful, the state is successful.

Robertson believes in practicing what he preaches and in leading by example.

“Every day I try to do a job that I expect of others to do,” he said. In his opinion, this is the best way to get the job completed in the most efficient way.

Robertson can be reached at 317-233-5578 or lroberts@isdh.state.in.us.

— Jelena Nikodijevic